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ABSTRACT

Five conference papers on use of technology in the second language classroom are presented, including: "Concept-Acquisition: Tapping the Internet for Ideas" (Jack Kimball), which offers suggestions for locating and using appropriate Internet materials; "Making Reading More Manageable--The Choice Offered by On-Line Newspapers and Magazines" (Anthony Robins), on finding online sources for reading materials; "Computerized Test and Material Production" (John Bauman), on use of spreadsheet programs for entering and manipulating instructional materials and tests; "Designing Genre-Based Materials To Use with Videos" (Damian Lucantonio), a description of a teacher workshop on instructional material development; and "Content Video in the EFL Classroom" (Michael Furmanovsky), on selecting and customizing content-area videotape recordings of different types for English-as-a-second-language classroom use. Individual papers contain references. (MSE)

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Section Four
Using Technology in the Classroom

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Concept-Acquisition: Tapping the Internet for Ideas

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Introduction

The influence of electronic media on college English teaching has been greatly accelerated by technological innovations available through the Internet. What are these innovations, and why should we care?

First, some definitions: The Internet is a technology somewhat like a phone line that connects computers; the now-familiar worldwide web (WWW) is a popular protocol within the Internet that links data from one computer to another. Together, the Internet and WWW are the means through which we connect with new media for the L2 classroom: on-line texts, graphics, audio/video elements, e-mail, video conferencing, and the like.

As far as benefits of the technology, I want to suggest that the Internet and new media (a) grant students more turns for taking language practice, (b) promote a questioning mind and deeper processing of information, and (c) help bring about expanded cycles of learning. To spell out the *why* as well as the *how* of these benefits, it will be helpful to concentrate, first, on theory and, second, on practical examples.

Theory?

A central challenge in adapting Internet media is to situate such practice within a lucid framework of language learning theory. By definition, current deployment of Internet-generated materials for language instruction is in its infancy. Nonetheless, language teachers' early experience with technologies like the Internet resonates with salient ideas debated among developmental psychologists, namely, the sometimes complementary and more often contrary influences of behaviorism and constructivism.

Behaviorist theories of B.F. Skinner (1968, 1971) are based upon learning as observable change (behavior). Change results from an individual's response to environmental events (stimuli), and this behavior produces overt consequences such as defining a word or solving a discrete problem. When stimulus-response (S-R) patterns are reinforced (rewarded), the individual is conditioned to respond. S-R approaches for teaching L2 foster repetition, memorization, and "response" to bits of language — isolated words and phrases or stand-alone passages often divorced from applicable situation or purpose. Limits to rote memorization and decontextualized response notwithstanding, behaviorist approaches achieve defined goals according to measurable criteria like maximizing the mean performance of a class and minimizing its performance variance (Atkinson, 1972). Accordingly, teaching and learning processes can be rationalized into replicable syllabi and tests.

It is important to note that S-R and operant conditioning (OC) are at the very roots of first- and second-generation computer-aided instruction, and, in fact, continue to pertain to pedagogy generally and, more specifically, to applications of electronic media in course design. OC, for example, is widely used in programmed learning, and hence it is commonplace in educational computing. OC occurs in graduated frames of question and answer; learners receive immediate feedback; questions are arranged so responses are

likely to be correct and thus positively reinforced (Markle, 1969). This practice can be concatenated into drills, dialogues, scripted routines, and so forth. The learner "graduates" into longer and longer frames of OC, for example, covering a whole textbook.

Behaviorist approaches work in initial stages of L2 development, but behaviorism as a psychological theory cannot account for cognitive development in L2. More important, behaviorist approaches cannot inform us on how to move from a focus on language to a focus on concepts, the language-based building blocks of cognition and psychological development. For this, we turn to constructivism.

To envision the constructivist approach, imagine the learner engaged in practices that do not reward or punish isolated responses, but require the learner to figure out what she or he needs and then to proceed "constructing" ways to do it, making meaning from stimuli by way of prior experience (Bruner, 1990). Lev Vygotsky refers to this meaning-making as "internalization," a theoretical figure that moves the notion of language development far beyond passive intake or memorizing (as typified by behaviorist theory). Vygotsky also uses the term "transform" — that is, the learner transforms a stimulus, such as a new vocabulary item, from the social setting where it originates (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). The learner thus internalizes vocabulary, for example, by way of both constructing its content and reconstructing its social form.

Further, the learner internalizes both content and form — taking in the meaning of a vocabulary item, to extend our initial example — by way of creating a "best guess" approximation of its meaning. The learner does this by (a) cross-referencing the item with other acquired items (constructing content) and (b) placing the vocabulary item within a range of potential concepts, taking contextual clues from the social setting (reconstructing form).

What about the Internet?

Materials culled from Internet media constitute an ideal point of departure for constructivist approaches that invite concept development. In the case of college classes, one way students can break with their overly-conditioned patterns of memorizing is to become immersed in subject matter like literature, economics, business administration, medicine, etc. Here, Internet-generated materials can be flexibly arrayed to engage students with topics and cognitive tasks relevant to students' professional futures. Such an immersion elevates pedagogy from mere language training to the cultivation of language for acquiring new concepts.

To define "concept" informally, the term incorporates far more than learning vocabulary. Rather, a concept is a matrix of associated meanings and experiences enriched by language, practical tasks, and other mental operations. With regard to acquiring new concepts, through judicious use of data gathered from Internet media, teachers and students can avail themselves of material to "construct" appropriate subject matter. In aggregate, subject matter can be pitched toward higher level inquiry, or, internalization and acquisition of concepts, by keeping in mind the following hypothesized axioms related to constructivism.

1. Ideally, learning activities provide multiple perspectives of content (Spiro, Feltovitch, Jacobson and Coulson, 1992).

2. Activities avoid oversimplifying content — but support context-dependent knowledge (Spiro and Jehng, 1990).

3. The use of case-based instruction emphasizes internalized construction of concepts (Jonassen, Ambruso and Olesen, 1992).

4. The deeper the processing — the better, that is, activities should incorporate visuals and other aids for making associations (Craik and Lockhart, 1972).

5. Activities should encourage the SQ3R formula: surveying, questioning, reading, recalling and reviewing materials under study (O'Neil, 1978; Schmeck, 1986).

I'll set aside generalized accounts of how these axioms and corollaries are quite commonly in play in the Internet classroom — corollaries such as how learning activities via the Internet trigger collaboration and provide learners with the "glue of physical context" (Eggebrecht et al., 1996). But as I continue with samples of my own experiments using Internet-generated materials, I will refer to many of these points.

Cases in practice

Earlier I proposed that the Internet and new media, such as e-mail and online texts, help promote a questioning mind, increase students' participation, and widen and deepen cycles of learning — cycles that might incorporate, for instance, reading online texts, journal writing via e-mail, the teacher's and others' reading and commenting on journal entries online, in-class discussion augmented by Internet graphics and/or video conferencing, and so on. Internet-generated media encourage higher mental processing, then, via a dynamic mix of elements, a toolkit of interactivity to help students learn more. In this context, the basic teaching tool for the English classroom is the online text whose advantages may include not only reading matter, but also the mix of video/audio and other elements to enrich and increase ways to encode text, as well as rapid access to associated data that can be searched, updated, and used for other purposes.

When we access the Living Arts section of *The New York Times* <http://www.nytimes.com>, for example, we and our students can partake of cultural information from North America that would not otherwise be available for our immediate and collective perusal. Imagine choosing one article of dozens available any day, an article that contrasts heroic stereotypes as portrayed in recent film releases. This topic might work for a humanities class dealing in mythology, film narrative, cross-cultural analysis, etc. Since this is an online text from a major newspaper, it offers more than contrastive rhetoric. It also supplies us with dynamic graphics (stills from the films under discussion), links to related articles (that is, fast access to other reading matter via the Internet), and videos (action clips featuring the characters written about in the article). All of these elements, the online text, graphics, links to other texts, and links to videos constitute a unit of interrelated data to deepen our engagement and increase ways for us to encode the essential information.

Regarding my recent experience teaching via the Internet, I will refer to a set of files or texts I developed over the last year by, among other means, gathering and adapting materials procured on-line. That is, I have compiled files of information for teaching and learning via the Internet, and in turn, via the Internet I have "published" these files, which are accessed and read (and available for appropriation and adaptation) by my students and others worldwide.

Let me set up my teaching strategy by sketching some background. I work with bright second-year medical students. They come to class in groups of 25 with some experience using a computer — some have a great deal of experience — though very few have done much computing in English. In terms of computer resources, they and I work in a newly equipped lab where the ratio is approximately two Macintosh computers for every student.

In brief, the text I designed, "Topics in Medical English" <http://interserver.miyazaki-med.ac.jp/~Kimball/med/1.htm>, is for highly capable undergraduate doctors-in-training. My objective has been to expand the traditional focus on technical vocabulary in order to include more substantial subject matter — more substantial linguistically and intellectually. I developed topic categories with the aim of having students use English to think medically, to become more analytical and to conceptualize in clinical contexts. Thus, the topic areas balance technical data, such as anatomy, with clinical narrative and case-study to increase ways for students to encode the technical information, and transform it into richer and better integrated conceptual understanding.

When students confront a technical file like "Anatomy of the Elbow," they find specialized data, vocabulary, supportive graphics, and text. The text becomes animated by students' following the link to a subsidiary text on "Tennis Elbow," a clinical scenario detailing a reality-based

context to encode vocabulary and apply anatomical information. In sum, students move from skeletal vocabulary, the bare bones (conceptually and literally), to a detailed description of a human condition! In this way, processing technical information that may have led students to mere memorizing leads to analyzing data more deeply and more flexibly.

Similarly, a file on cardiovascular vocabulary leads to case-based "Heart Topics," articles that extend the lexicon so that students can start to apply vocabulary to context-defined problems. These "Heart Topics" feature a variety of files, such as the following "Women's Issues": changes in cholesterol during post-operative rehabilitation, gender and therapy, the estrogen factor, etc. Students not only read these articles, they also follow links to other data associated with these topics. Their reading of the Internet texts is supplemented by numerous opportunities to internalize the content and contextual form of the information they are trying to comprehend. These opportunities include frequent turn-taking in class discussion and debate, shared dialogues in the review of texts (fact-checking, for example), and impromptu group-conferencing while writing up their findings from texts and discussion. As well as encouraging greater cooperation among students — collaborative invention of a sort — the Internet-assisted cycle of reading texts, discussion, and writing offers students more L2 practice and, over time, creates social and physical contexts for them to better acquire concepts in L2. Additionally, in the process of probing data mediated by the Internet, students reveal to themselves how knowledge is constructed — that is, by the very flexible means they are deploying to master concepts under review.

Conclusion

With respect to college English, the key behind the Internet and the new media is a teaching and learning environment ripe for internalization, an environment where each student develops a more questioning mind, fostered by multiple perspectives of the form and content of cognitive tasks. The inquiry-based classroom, in this sense, becomes the "robust" connection to the Internet. It follows that the teacher takes on new roles as media-specialist and pilot-and-curator of data in appropriate forms. Here is an example of such piloting, suggestive of one future outcome of college language teaching, although this is not an account of an L2 class, but of an engineering class at Rensselear Polytechnical Institute:

> Instead of large lectures supplemented with tutorials and labs, students attend each class for fewer hours per week, but in smaller, more concentrated sessions. Professors monitor students working together on computers, breaking to give minilectures when students get stuck on the same problem. The goal is mastery of concepts, not memorization of a body of knowledge. (Arenson, 1996)

Many of us will soon be moving our English classes into the computer lab, or, alternatively, moving computers into the English classroom. Even now, though, we can take advantage of the Internet — with or without direct student access to computers. In instances where computer availability is limited, teachers can provide students with "hard copies" of valuable data assembled and organized for concept mastery. When our classes incorporate strategies such as this, whether or not teachers and students tap simultaneously into the Internet, we are tapping into a new mindset, one whose aim is to transform information into conceptual understanding.

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Making Reading More Manageable — The Choice Offered by On-line Newspapers and Magazines

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Among material available from the developing resource of the Internet is a profusion of on-line newspapers and magazines, many of which are offshoots of printed forms. Others, however, are unique to the Internet. This article will focus on the ways in which they can be selected and adapted for use with classes, especially at university level. It will look at the ways in which manageability can be enhanced, both in the sense of making reading more approachable and less difficult to handle, and in the sense of easing the organisation and integrating of activities.

Before looking at the sources themselves, the background to university teaching should be briefly considered. University classes must try to successfully combine an increase in language competence with a broadening of knowledge and outlook. Large classes inevitably bring with them a range of abilities and of interests. Catering for these requires a striving to offer students as much choice as possible, hopefully allowing the situation where, in the words of Simmons, Yonally & Haig (1996) it is possible to "bestow some of the benefits of smaller classes by breaking them down into manageable and knowable subunits" (p. 268).

Large classes, therefore need to be offered choice where it is often absent. Well, how about coursebooks? Do they not offer quite adequate sources of reading material? Obviously, they have much to offer, but usually do not provide a degree of choice at

any one point, lack a great enough concern with giving opinions and with communicative follow-on activities, and can be very time-sensitive when handling news and current affairs related issues. On-line sources can offer advantages in these areas and furthermore provide greater choice merely by countering the "textbook fetish" referred to by McAlpine (1995).

Additionally, before looking at such sources, it is also important to consider why choice is so paramount. I, perhaps like many other native-speaking teachers in Japan, read relatively little in Japanese. When I do, mainly in the area of a specific hobby interest, it appears to be because several factors are present. These aid both processing and motivation. Firstly, the material is only available in Japanese. Secondly, content schemata are more easily activated, as there is a good level of background knowledge of the topic. Thirdly, formal schemata are also more easily activated, as there is good knowledge of the genre type. While perhaps not all of these factors can be supplied in the large class environment, at least they need to be aimed for. As Horibe (1995) has reiterated, reading is "a highly complex and sometimes roundabout problem-solving activity, in which all pieces of information, from knowledge of vocabulary and grammar to knowledge of the topic, must be brought into play" (p. 181).

Horibe has also focussed on the processing strategies of his students. Models of such processes have progressed from earlier diametrically opposed "top-down" and "bottom-up" models to more interactive syntheses. However, his research confirms expectations that bottom-up processing dominates among his students, even among those who make the greatest use of top-down processing. Obviously, the potential to develop a greater focus on the latter and a comparative reduction in the former is also going to be desirable when considering the merits of reading material from on-line newspapers and magazines.

How can the myriad of sources be selected? While, as will be shown, students themselves can play a prominent role at the stage of choosing specific articles, the watchwords at the earlier stage of choosing sources themselves are "breadth" and "accessibility." Breadth through choosing sources offering a wide range of articles, thus allowing as wide a choice as possible from among those. Accessibility through choosing sources which are accessible to students, in terms of interest and level of difficulty; and accessibility, in terms of time taken to physically access and download the material. The Internet is often touted as representing a democratic repository of material from sources large and small, under threat from censorship and commercialization. Still, the major established sources win. At the risk of contributing to even greater domination of the media by "barons," it has to be admitted that such sources are buoyed by the greater ease of their connections, which give the all-important faster accessibility. They also provide a range of material which allows a library of a wide range of interesting articles to be steadily built up in readiness for use, rather than necessitating too many last minute searches for something relevant. They do, however, also provide useful and comprehensive search facilities.

The choice of articles themselves is all-important. While, from the point of view of activating content schemata, it is perhaps ideal for students to have a high degree of choice in the articles they read, this may not be possible unless extensive self-study facilities are available. A balance has to be created to pay heed to Silberstein's (1994) warning that "one might assume that students can therefore read only what they know. This is not the case. It would be a disservice to rob students of the opportunity to learn through reading" (p. 8). As I will show, reading would however seem to be more successful when it impinges on one or more areas of students' interests.

Therefore, it is helpful to carry out surveys both before and after reading. These can usefully start back with attitudes towards reading in general. My survey of 3rd and 4th year students found that reading a book (18%) and reading a magazine (36%) compared with watching television (46%), as their first choice activities, given some spare time. Among sixty 2nd year students starting a Media English course, only sixteen (26. 5%) answered that they ever read newspapers in English. Less than 8% of a group of seventy-nine 2nd year Technical English students had ever read

scientific journals in English and additionally considered writing more important than reading as a skill for improvement. However, as more than half of the journals in the library of this particular university are in languages other than Japanese, there would seem to be some likelihood of circumstances and views changing. More specifically, a survey of relative levels of interest in different technologies among these same students gave some pointers for potentially appealing articles.

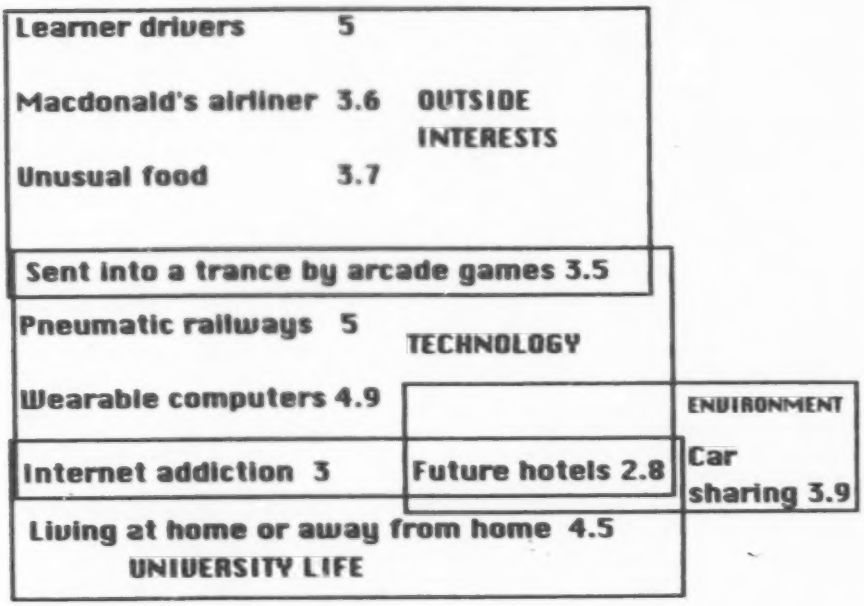
The constraints on choice which can be offered to large classes where Internet access is in the hands of the teacher must be acknowledged. However, she or he can provide a certain level of choice, to a degree absent from coursebooks. This can be through perhaps offering a choice from three different but related articles or through a choice from a greater number, either on the same theme or different themes, and delivering them in the following lesson to match demand. A degree of relationship between the articles, whether they are on the same theme or not, is most useful in facilitating the kinds of follow-up activities which will be referred to later.

Taking articles used with a group of 3rd years in this current academic year, what were the criteria in their selection? As stated elsewhere, the chief requirement was to both activate background knowledge and also to extend the range of these students' knowledge, outlooks and viewpoints. This was largely sought for by looking at familiar topics in different environments. These topics can be grouped within four categories: environment, technology, outside interests and university life. The latter two categories are obviously applicable to university students in general. Technology is particularly applicable at this university, which specialises in its various fields, and environmental material is admittedly selected as an area which demands input, not least to balance the previous category.

Figure 1 illustrates these categories with the themes of each specific article. While it is not immediately apparent that a different environment is concerned, examples are "Macdonald's airliner" (Switzerland), "Car sharing" (Scotland) and "Future hotels" (USA/Poland). As indicated before, it is important to survey students' interests both before and after material selection. While individual articles have also included feedback questions on such views, Figure 1 indicates a more overall and cumulative view. Students in this group were invited to rank as many of the ten articles as they had read, with 1 being given to the most interesting, 2 to the next most interesting and so on. Therefore, those with lower scores were the more positively received. While there were obviously differences from student to student, the one with the lowest score is "Future hotels. " Perhaps the brevity of this title fails to explain that it is about a competition held for students from various countries, including the two named above, to design an innovative hotel. It was necessary to combine innovative technology with imagination and a strong concern for the environment. As recognized in the figure, it encompasses three of the categories. Additionally, it can be seen that those which encompass two categories are also those which receive the next most positive feedback. To an extent at least, it seems to show that the more areas of interest are impinged, the more positive the appeal.

As well as offering greater choice, on-line sources also provide the opportunity for both editing and highlighting text. While editing may seem attractive, particularly to reduce the reading load contributed by length, it must be exercised with care. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) concern with the "texture" and the "unity" of text (p. 1-2) acts immediately as a warning. Reducing length may also destroy helpful redundancy, where ideas and information are clarified and reinforced. In addition, the writer's intentions may be effectively corrupted, as opinions and message are weakened or distorted. In contrast, editing gives the opportunity to lower the students' high processing load. This can be achieved through some reordering of less than logical texts and the editing of complex extratextural references. Reducing length may also allow a sharper focus through facilitating a more in-depth understanding of a shorter text, rather than students having to resort to a less than positive reliance on large-scale skimming. Finally, material from on-line sources can be more easily and rapidly adapted and split to produce integrated follow-up activities and informa-

Figure 1 - Levels of interest in articles used from on-line newspaper and magazine sources (3rd year university students).



tion gap tasks.

Similarly, the opportunities to highlight text are both simplified and enhanced. Colour can be added or, more economically, use can be made of underlining, italicising, and the computer's range of fonts to provide guidance to students. Such direction can be achieved through highlighting sections of text to give a clearer indication of article layout or through highlighting directional items such as conjunctions. As with editing, such means may be open to criticism as providing a form of crutch which would be difficult for the student to throw away when eventually dealing with unsullied material. However, the diverse factors and heavy cumulative load involved in processing during reading have already been indicated, as has the degree of unfamiliarity of authentic reading sources among university students. Support for such load reducing measures as editing and highlighting is provided by Davies (1995) who considers that, "when extra time is used for visual processing or word identification, there is less time available for attention to other sources of information, such as semantic or background knowledge" (p. 71). More specifically in relation to highlighting, she notes the Graphic Outline system (p. 151), developed in Australia to ensure that students study the actual arrangement of a text in advance. Highlighting can certainly achieve this.

Reading does not exist in a vacuum within a course. While reading material from on-line sources may mainly take place as homework, follow-up class activities need to be integrated. When opinions are stressed as the focus of responses to the articles, follow-up activities can be organised and integrated more smoothly. Firstly, the ability to more easily offer several articles means that activities can be built around students explaining and exchanging information about their respective articles. Facilities provided by some on-line sources for feedback by e-mail also mean that other readers' opinions can be discovered and students' opinions sent. Secondly, jigsaw and information gap activities can be more rapidly created by the greater ease of editing and adaptation explained above. At the

simplest level, a longer article can be split into two more manageable halves, with perhaps both retaining the introduction and conclusion. Students can then work together to fill each other in.

Criticism may be levelled both that the Internet is not being used to its full interactive potential and that not enough advantages are offered over traditional printed sources. While the Internet already offers or potentially will offer wider capabilities, I am looking at it from the viewpoint of one of many who teaches courses with large classes and limited contact time. In this environment, no aspect can be allowed to dominate time to too great an extent and the element of face-to-face communication has to be preeminent. Similarly, there is a need to encompass exposure to a range of types of both discourse and genre and articles from newspapers or magazines, whether from traditional printed or on-line sources, can only occupy so much time. As to a final comparison between those two sources, quite apart from the greater capabilities to edit and highlight referred to, on-line newspapers and magazines provide the opportunity for a far wider range of material in non-native speaking and publishing locations. Once there is already provision of computing facilities, this material is both more economical and more timely.

Opportunities for future development are primarily provided by building up facilities for greater choice, both through access to libraries of material collected from on-line sources and through greater provision of self-access facilities. Such self-access facilities give students a greater say in the choice of material and offer more opportunities for them to suggest and offer material to be used in courses. Perhaps they will also have the time and patience to pursue and discover the more esoteric sources and make that aspect more manageable too!

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Computerized Test and Material Production

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Introduction

Most teachers prepare material for their classes to supplement or even replace a commercial textbook. The ability to use material customized for the students' needs and teacher's style easily justifies the time spent in material preparation. Information technology is progressing rapidly and this provides ever-changing options in producing and storing class material. While once the pride of an organized teacher might have been a file cabinet full of typo-free ditto masters, now we can store a drawerful of handouts on a single floppy disk, ready to print out and copy for class. But computers have the potential to do much more than merely replace a filing cabinet. I'd like to describe a further step away from the "file folder" model of material production and storage.

Spreadsheets

A spreadsheet program provides a flexible way to initially put material into a computer. Spreadsheets can rearrange and combine elements in ways that word processors can't. As computer technology advances, the programs and procedures that I use will change, and different systems require different steps to achieve the same results. Therefore the discussion here will be in general terms, though my experience as a Macintosh owner using Microsoft applications may show through. I hope these ideas will help teachers develop processes that work with their own systems.

A spreadsheet appears on your screen as a grid of small rectangles. Each rectangle is a cell. Anything can be typed into a cell. Rows are horizontal lines of cells, columns are vertical lines of cells. Spreadsheets are usually used for mathematical calculation, but they can handle text as well. When text from a spreadsheet is imported into a word processing program, the contents of the rows will be separated by a return, or line-ending keystroke. The contents of each cell on a row will be separated by a tab. These settings can be changed and may be different in some programs. After learning to visualize the results of importing to a word processing program, typing into a spreadsheet is as straightforward as typing into word processing document.

The advantage of a spreadsheet is its ability to rearrange elements by cutting, copying, pasting and sorting. These are ways of moving sections of text. The first three can be done in a word processor by selecting text and manipulating it. The process is the same in a spreadsheet, with an important difference. In word processing, the selected area must be consecutive text (as one reads), while in a spreadsheet the selected area can be adjacent in a left-right or an up-down direction. Therefore, one can enter different types of data into different columns and create a page with any combination of types by cutting, copying and pasting.

Sorting is rearranging the order of the cells according to the contents of a specific row or column. My vocabulary material spreadsheets are set up with one word per row, so I always sort by row. When entire rows are selected and sorted by a column, the rows move as a unit, so the elements of the rows don't get mixed. Either a portion or the entire sheet can be sorted. The programs sorts into numerical or alphabetical order, depending on the contents of the column that the rows are sorted by.

In my spreadsheets, the words are grouped into units, and one of the columns contains the unit number. When I sort the rows by that column, the units are brought

together. Another column has the part of speech. When I sort by that column, all of the nouns, verbs, etc. are brought together. Sorting by a column of random numbers will randomize the order of the rows. By consecutive sorting, you can obtain something such as "a random selection of the nouns from units 6-10." Select the rows of units 6-10 and sort them by part of speech. Then select the nouns and sort the rows by the random number column. Take the top 5 or 15 or however many you need. Sorting is a very useful function.

Using a spreadsheet

I have used spreadsheets to make vocabulary material for several programs with different curriculums. I have a set of points associated with each word, all or some of which I can choose to make my students responsible for learning. My spreadsheets include the following elements, each in its own column: word, unit number, part of speech, definition, example sentence, opposite, synonym, associated preposition, preposition cloze sentence, cloze sentence, cloze sentence answer, open-ended question, and random number. I can use this spreadsheet in several ways.

First, I can use the text in the cells to make worksheets. The cloze sentences and open-ended questions can be grouped in the spreadsheet and then exported to word processing. They can then be pasted into a worksheet or formatted to make a new worksheet. Material from different units can be mixed by selecting rows from those units and sorting by the random number column. New items can be mixed with the old as they are written. As time goes by, the number of items grows, and it becomes possible to produce many different worksheets for each group of words from the same spreadsheet. It's not necessary to have each column filled for each word. Sorting by a column will bring all of the rows with filled cells in that column together.

Test items in a spreadsheet are the equivalent of a test bank. Tests can be made using the same procedures as worksheets. In my classes, the weekly quizzes are word/definition matching quizzes using the format of the levels tests in Teaching and Learning Vocabulary (Nation, 1990, Appendix 8, pp. 261-272). These quizzes consist of a set of groups of 6 words and 3 definitions, to be matched by the student (figure 1). I make these by grouping word/definition pairs from the desired units and mixing them by sorting by the random number column. Then I create the groups of 6 words/3 definitions by clearing the cells between the groups (to create a blank line) and deleting 3 of the 6 definitions. Then I alphabetize the words to eliminate the relationship between the words and definitions. I end up with a set of groups like the one in figure 2. I export these groups to a word processing program, adjust the tabs and print it. The advantage of using the spreadsheet is that a number of different quizzes can be made easily, but the words and definitions only have to be typed once.

Already written tests can be imported into a spreadsheet. The items must be adjusted so that they each occupy a single line in the word processing program, with tabs at significant points. This can be done by hand, but often the replace function can be used to automate the process. If this adjustment is made in word processing, the resulting spreadsheet will contain one item per row, and can be easily sorted.

I also use the spreadsheet to keep track of what the students are responsible for knowing about each word. Sorting by columns that contain opposites, synonyms, collocation etc. will bring all of these components together. I'll print this as a reference and use it when planning class or writing material.

Conclusion

I have been happy with the usefulness of my spreadsheets. I have adapted spreadsheets created for one program in another by adding relevant information in new columns. I have used Japanese and English in the same spreadsheet. Recently I acquired a computer program that drills students as if they were using flash cards. The input to this program must be a text file in a specific format. I was able to easily arrange questions and answers from my spreadsheet into the required format. I would recommend experimenting with spreadsheets to any teacher with access to a computer. The greater initial effort pays off in the long term.

Reference

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Figure 1 Sample Texts

1	admire	
2	colony	_____ to respect and approve of someone or something
3	cup	
4	explore	_____ completely quiet
5	moon	
6	silent	_____ to learn about a place by travelling through it

1	dozen	
2	operator	_____ twelve
3	pleasant	
4	relief	_____ a feeling of happiness after an unpleasant feeling
5	throat	
6	yield	_____ enjoyable; nice

figure 2 Spreadsheet Sample

1	admire					
2	colony	____ to respect and approve of someone or something				
3	cup					
4	explore	____ completely quiet				
5	moon					
6	silent	____ to learn about a place by travelling through it				
1	dozen					
2	operator	____ twelve				
3	pleasant					
4	relief	____ a feeling of happiness after an unpleasant feeling				
5	throat					
6	yield	____ enjoyable; nice				

Designing genre-based materials to use with videos

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Introduction

Using videos in the classroom is widely recognized as an important resource for language teaching. The following is an account of a workshop in which participants drew on the influences of genre theory to examine how teaching materials can be designed for use with videos. First, the workshop was designed to show participants how high interest videos can be used effectively in the classroom. A surfing video, a feature movie video, and a rock music video were used. Second, it was designed to show how an understanding of genre and text structure could be of use to language teaching. A range of genres from high-interest videos were introduced and analyzed. Third, the workshop was designed to demonstrate the use of a variety of teaching materials. The following teaching materials were designed from the various video texts: matching activities for vocabulary, grouping activities for vocabulary, and box diagram activities for text structure. Finally, a discussion was conducted to examine the key issues that emerged during the workshop.

Genre theory: a rationale

Genre theory has largely evolved from systemic linguistics (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Martin, 1985).

Recently, in countries like Australia, it has become an important influence in language teaching theory and practice (NSW Department of School Education, 1994).

Genre theory is a functional view of language. It looks at how language enables us to do things for different purposes. The emphasis is on meaning rather than form and how language is involved in the construction of meaning. Therefore, language is seen as a resource for making meaning (Derewianka, 1990, pp. 3-4) rather than a resource for constructing syntactical rules.

Because meanings are found within a text as a whole (Derewianka, 1990, p. 4), genre theory focusses on the level of the text (Martin, 1985). Traditionally, syntactical approaches to language have focussed on the sentence-level. However, in genre-based approaches to language teaching, the text is regarded as being the basic unit of meaning (Derewianka, 1990, p. 4) and as such represents the teaching focal point.

A genre is a text that can be either spoken or written and can be described as a staged, goal-oriented, social activity (Martin, 1985). In other words, a genre is a text that has some kind of structure (or way in which its ideas are organized), has a purpose, and performs a social function in any given society. An example of a spoken text might be the dialog of a casual conversation. A written text, on the other hand, could be a newspaper report or a letter to a friend. Thus, teaching students how to construct effective spoken and written texts is considered to be important for real-world communication.

Genre theory also makes explicit the ways in which language is used for different purposes, e. g. , to inform, describe, argue, persuade, and so on. In order to achieve these different purposes, text structure (or the organization of the ideas and the language in a text) is important. For example, in an opinion text in English, we often start with a proposition, which is usually supported by reason(s), and then reiterated by a conclusion (Derewianka, 1990, pp. 70-71). This structure of language and ideas is considered to be appropriate for the purpose of getting an opinion across effectively in English. However, as the purpose changes, so too does the structure of the text. Hence, the text structure of a narrative genre or of a procedure genre is different to that of an opinion because the purpose of each is different. Thus the structure of a text (or its generic structure) is related to its purpose. Making students aware of the role of text structure and exploring how texts work (Derewianka, 1990) are regarded as important issues in teaching language as a form of communication.

In genre theory, the construction of texts is considered to be a culturally-specific activity (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). While many cultures need to be able to give opinions or explain how something works, how they structure their language to do these things can vary from culture to culture. For example, the way in which opinions are presented in the Japanese language and the Japanese culture are not necessarily the same way as they are in English (Lucantonio, 1996). Yet they are perfectly appropriate to the Japanese culture and the Japanese way of doing things. Genre theory makes explicit these culturally-specific ways in which language is organized to achieve different purposes. This is considered to be important for students when learning how to communicate in a foreign language.

The workshop

Introduction

Initially, five genres that were considered to be common in everyday language use were introduced to the participants (adapted from Martin, 1985, & Derewianka, 1990). These were then discussed in terms of the purpose of each and the generic structure of each (see Appendix 1).

Next, an example was given. An explanation text from an interview with a professional surfer was shown, explaining about violence in the water in Hawaii. Participants were then shown how a teaching material called a box diagram could be constructed based on an analysis of the texts generic structure (see Appendix 2).

Then, a second example was introduced. A song was played from a rock video featuring the popular rock band, *U2*. Participants were shown how teaching materials could be designed from an

analysis of the songs generic structure. The teaching materials were: a matching activity for vocabulary (see Appendix 3), a grouping activity for vocabulary (see Appendix 4), and a box diagram activity for main points and generic structure (see Appendix 5).

The purpose of all the teaching materials, particularly the box diagrams, was to make explicit for students the construction of an explanation genre.

Participants task

The participants were then given four texts from the feature movie, *The Godfather (Part1)*. Each text represented a different genre from different segments of the movie. The genres were: a procedure, an explanation, an exposition, and a discussion.

In pairs, the participants were then asked to do the following:

1. Watch each video segment (twice) and identify the genre and the generic structure of each text.
2. Design a box diagram activity for each text based on the generic structure analyses.
3. Suggest additional teaching materials that could be designed based on the generic structure analyses.

Discussion

The following points represented the key issues that emerged during the discussion, upon completion of the workshop task.

In general, the participants were able to accurately identify the genre and generic structure of each text without much difficulty. They were also able to describe how box diagrams and other teaching materials could be designed based on their analyses. This would suggest that the participants were able to cope with the workshop task. Unfortunately, time did not permit the participants to complete the design of all the materials.

Most participants agreed that designing box diagram materials based on an analysis of text structure would assist learners to communicate for different purposes. They were seen as a useful way of keeping learners focussed and "to the point." By providing them with a structure for a particular genre, learners could recognize how to organize their language and their thoughts to achieve different purposes.

The discussion also focussed on the need to introduce key vocabulary and grammar to the learners before the box diagram activity. The matching and grouping materials were seen as a logical step before the more text-focussed box diagram activity. Furthermore, the participants agreed that they could clearly recognize the key vocabulary that was necessary to be taught (rather than every word) after an analysis of the texts generic structure.

The notion of using the text as a model for the task to be performed was also discussed. In a learner-centered classroom, providing students with whole, real-life tasks to perform is considered to be important in facilitating communication (Nunan, 1988, 1989). It could be argued that if students can produce a complete text then they are indeed producing a whole, real-life task. Designing teaching materials from a text analysis was then seen to be an effective way of providing learners with a model for both the language and the task to be performed.

Concerns were raised that the generic structure seemed to be too prescriptive and too rigid. It was suggested, however, that genre-based approaches are not about providing prescriptive recipes. Rather, they are concerned with providing information about the development of effective texts for particular purposes (Derewianka, 1990, p. 5). Genre-based approaches look for general patterns of language that are typical of a particular genre and not for hard and fast formulas (Derewianka, 1990, p. 83). It was recommended that teachers analyze a text for what they think it is doing rather than try to sqeeze it into a rigid formula. It was also mentioned that all texts are not model texts. While texts do have certain compulsory elements that help them achieve their purposes, some elements are more compulsory and more optional than others; therefore, there is a degree of flexibility in the way in which language and ideas are organized in a text. Furthermore, a text might be a mixture of genres, either deliberately or carelessly, and could include additional elements. However, using a text with a well organized text structure was seen by the participants to be important in providing learners with an effective lan-

guage learning model. It was recommended that teachers should consider the structure of the text and not just the topic, when choosing texts to use in the classroom.

Finally, designing lessons around genres was seen as a useful way in selecting manageable and meaningful segments from a video. Knowing what to look for and what to choose from a video was considered to be an important issue by the participants. In this regard, identifying segments based on genres was seen as being a useful way of guiding teachers in choosing what to teach and how much to teach from a video.

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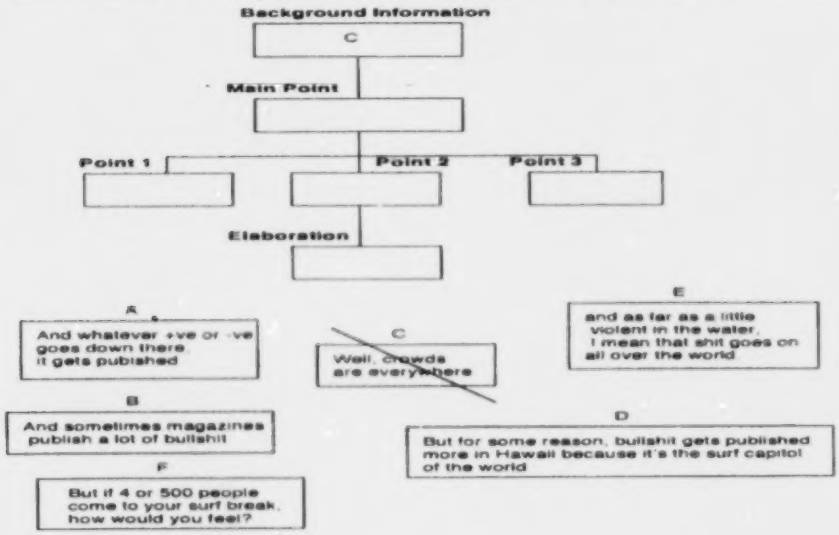
Appendix 1: Five common genres

Genre	Purpose	Structure
Narrative	To entertain; to tell a story	(Abstract) ^ Orientation ^ Complication ^Evaluation ^ Resolution ^ (Coda)
Procedure	To instruct how to do something	Goal ^ Steps
Explanation	To explain how or why something occurs	Phenomenon ^ Explanation sequence
Exposition	To persuade by arguing one side of an issue	Proposition ^ Reasons ^ Conclusion
Discussion	To persuade by arguing for and against an issue	Proposition ^ Reasons for Reasons against ^ Conclusion

(adapted from Martin, 1985 & Derewianka, 1990)

Appendix 2: Box diagram activity

1. Watch the video, & fill in the missing information from below. One is done for you


Background Information
C
Main Point
Point 1
Point 2
Point 3
Elaboration
A
And whatever +ve or -ve goes down there it gets published
C
Well, crowds are everywhere
E
and as far as a little violent in the water, I mean that shit goes on all over the world
B
And sometimes magazines publish a lot of bullshit
D
But for some reason, bullshit gets published more in Hawaii because it's the surf capitol of the world
F
But if 4 or 500 people come to your surf break, how would you feel?

2. Using this structure, explain in your own words why there is violence in the water in Hawaii

Appendix 3 : Matching activity for vocabulary

Match the words on the left to the meanings on the right. The first 3 are done for yc

1. all can do	K	A. problems are removed
2. tear down the walls		B. love ends
3. feel sunlight on my face		C. everybody is the same (equal); no labels
4. take shelter from the poison rain	H	D. disappears, ends
5. streets have no names		E. change society
6. flown on the wind		F. helping peace
7. love turns to rust		G. become happy
8. want to run, want to hide		H. hide from war & hate
9. building their burdens of love		I. escape
10. dust coulds disappear		J. give my life some hope
11. reach out & touch the flame	J	K. I only want to do this

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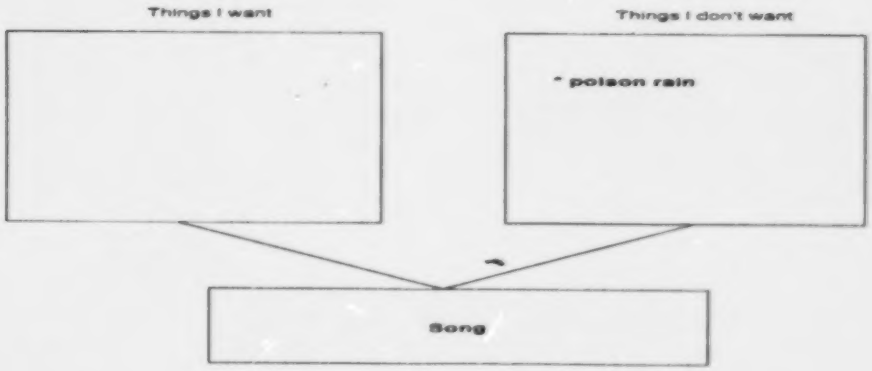
Appendxi 4: Grouping activity for vocabulary

Place the words below into the correct group. The first one is done for you.



~~poison rain,~~ love turns to rust; touch the flame;

burdens of love; the walls; street have no names;

dust clouds; sunlight on my face.

Appendix 5: Box diagram activity

1. Watch the video of the U2 song. Fill in the boxes with the information below. 3 are done for you.

A. all I can do

~~B. tear down the walls~~

~~C. feel sunlight on my face~~

D. take shelter from the poison rain

E. streets have no names

F. flown on the wind

G. go there with you

H. love turns to rust

I. want to run, want to hide

J. building their burdens of love

K. dust clouds disappear

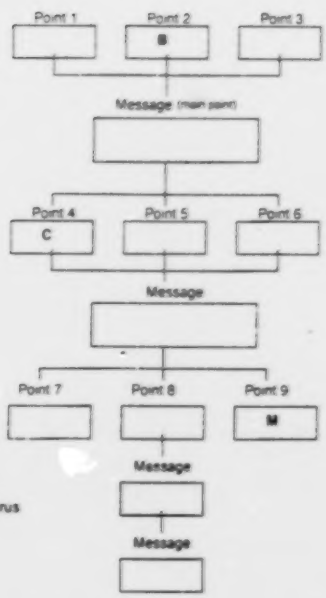
L. reach out & touch the flame

~~M. share you a place~~

N. city is a Rust

2. Write a title for the song

3. In your own words, explain to your partner what the song is about. Try to include as many point as you can.



N.B.
Message = chorus
(main point)

Content Video in the EFL Classroom

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The growing acceptance of content teaching within EFL as a motivator for students has led in recent years to the creation of native speaker-taught content courses in the English language departments of many universities. While some universities restrict these classes to higher level students, many others are open to students at the intermediate level. Such classes are necessarily different from so-called content-based courses offered to ESL students in overseas universities. The latter are designed for intermediate and upper-intermediate students who hope to enter overseas junior colleges or universities. Brinton, Snow And Wesche (1989) have published useful guidelines for teaching EFL (or "sheltered") content-based teaching courses to foreign students studying in an English speaking country. But how can these guidelines be adapted to content based classes in Japan, in which only a minority of students in the class intend to study in an overseas university?

Content Teaching in Japan

The reasons for the growing trend towards content teaching in Japan are too numerous and complex to discuss here. They are clearly evidenced, however, in the large increase in students who plan to study, or have already returned from studying, overseas. These students, as well as many others who hope to use English in their work after graduation, make up a small but significant minority of able and genuinely interested students capable of handling a content based course. It is thus now possible in many universities and colleges — most of which are now dismantling their General Education departments in accordance with Mombusho guidelines — to create genuine content courses or seminars, especially in the field of Area Studies. At the same time it is self-evident that these classes, made for a homogenous group of students living in their own country, cannot and should not be identical to those in a foreign institution itself.

Some useful general guidelines for designing and adapting content teaching methods used in foreign institutions to the Japanese university environment, are outlined by Halvorsen and Gettings (1996). The authors emphasize the "unique opportunities" that arise when teaching EFL students from the same cultural and linguistic background. In this environment, they suggest, it is particularly important to find an appropriate balance of content and language. In their effort to find this balance, the authors utilize a wide variety of non-traditional sources, such as posters, travel brochures, maps and magazine articles to stimulate interest in students who might not respond to a conventional textbook. Both also devote considerable time to developing mini-lectures at the appropriate level, and place an emphasis on project work and peer-edited written assignments. Video, too, is mentioned by the authors as an example of a visual component in their content classes, but the general nature of their article does not allow for a discussion of how to best make use of what may arguably be the single most important resource in content teaching in the L1 culture.

At its best, video can inform and stimulate students in a way that no lecture, however well delivered and thought out, can do. Indeed it seems self-evident that video could be an effective component of almost any content class. At the same time, however, its tendency to induce passivity in

students, and the difficulty of adapting it to the EFL classroom, leave it wide open to misuse. Indeed even the most enthusiastic proponents of using authentic video in the EFL classroom would probably accept that the vast majority of material cannot be easily or effectively applied to classroom activity. Put another way, the selection process for choosing suitable authentic video and then adapting it to the appropriate level of the students is far from obvious, and is invariably both time consuming and unscientific. It is for this reason, of course, that commercially made EFL video courses are produced, although this material too, while linguistically appropriate, has many drawbacks, most notably its artificiality and amateurishness. Like any other skill then, using authentic video effectively in EFL, not only requires some experience in the basic techniques of video use and materials creation, but also demands a certain intuition and a knowledge of students' own educational background. While there is no short-cut to achieving this expertise, the following guidelines may at least help to lessen problems in the video selection and adaption process.

Suggestions for selecting and customizing content videos

Most of the ideas outlined below are adapted from other academic disciplines, especially history and sociology. Students of these disciplines, however, are principally expected to absorb, analyze and process the information in the video. This information is often presented in the form of documentaries which frequently use historical or contemporary footage, together with interviews and explanatory narratives, in order to illuminate an event or help define an issue. Commercials, government propaganda and public service announcements are more commonly used in sociology or psychology, and in this case students are usually asked to analyze the images and words for their subtexts and assumptions, rather than their actual content. Yet, in both cases the main expectation of students is a written analytical report or verbal comments in a discussion setting. While some of these expectations may apply to an EFL content class in the L1 environment, several modifications are obviously needed if the video in question is to be useful both for language and content. These can summarized as follows:

Documentaries

Documentaries should be used only if the visuals are dense, varied and can stand alone. In most cases they should have English or L1 captions. This would apply to most American documentaries, which have encoded closed captions, and also to some overseas programs shown on Japanese satellite television. In general, interviews should be edited out or considerably shortened and the total length of any segment shown should be less than a third of the total class time. Documentaries should be used largely as a supplement to a (text based) unit on a particular topic and students should have done some background reading or preparation on the topic before watching. This may involve activities built around the relevant vocabulary, but may also include an effort to activate the students' individual L1 schemata developed in their high school studies of this topic. Finally, and most importantly, interactive and communicative information gap activities and assignments, similar to those used in conversation or in some cases, in reading classes, should be designed for lower intermediate and intermediate students.

Movies

Entire movies should not be shown in class, but carefully selected extracts from subtitled movies which deal informatively with a topic or issue can be edited and used as part of a larger unit. In addition, students can select from a teacher-approved list of movies with a strong cultural or historical content and watch it for homework over an extended period. Among the many assignments that could accompany this is a "movie notetaking" diary in which students take notes about what they have learned, both with respect to content and language. (Furmanovsky, 1994) Films should have either Japanese or English subtitles. Student "movie notetaking diaries" and carefully edited extracts from the films can be the basis for class activities.

TV commercials

Perhaps the biggest advantage of commercials is that they are relatively easy to find and prepare, in part because they are short, succinct , and, most critically for content teaching, often have have a cultural component. From a purely linguistic point of view, they frequently use idioms, expressions and double meanings which are of interest to students of colloquial English. Like any other video source, however, commercials have their limitations for content teaching. Relatively few commercials actually have a narrative or tell a "story." Finally the need to sell a product often tends to narrow the content and language of the commercial. Yet some commercials work extremely well in the content classroom because they reveal clear cultural differences in behavior or thinking and advertise something that would never be advertised in the students' own country, e.g. a political party or a certain type of product. Some commercials also refer to (and then sometimes make fun of) a stereotyped image or character from the L2 culture.

Public service announcements and government propaganda

Unlike commercials, public service anouncements do not sell a particular company's product or service. Usually made by the government or a non-profit organization, they give advice or information about an issue. Public service announcements can give an additional insight into the culture of the country in which they were made, since they sometimes reflect that culture's societal goals, as well as its sense of morality. Thus while they can be prepared by the instructor in much the same way as a commercial, students should be asked to focus on whom the announcement is aimed at and what behavioral change is being promoted. Government propaganda films, documentaries and old movies with clear stereotypes can be used to give insight into changes in attitudes towards issues such as race, alleged national character, women's roles, and a wide range of other issues. Since propaganda has usually been at its most extreme during war, video made during the era of the two world wars is particularly interesting for students. Some of these sources have been compiled in documentaries dealing with these issues, such as *Rosie the Riveter* (Women in World War II), and*Ethnic Notions* (Stereotypes of African-Americans).[1]

Examples of Activities for Content Teaching Through Video

Since the content videos recommended here vary in almost every detail, suggestions for adapting them to the EFL environment can best be done on an individual basis, by category.

Documentary

The Flapper: This half hour highly visual documentary of 1920's American women who adopted the attitudes and style of the so-called Flapper was edited down to 15 minutes by removing most of the interviews used by the film makers. Prior to viewing this closed-captioned video, students read a two-page segment in an American junior high school textbook for homework. While watching, they are asked to note down how the Flappers differed from their Victorian predecessors, and are then given a multiple choice question which asks them what new habits or lifestyles of middle class women Flappers were illustrated in the video. Six correct and four incorrect (but plausible) answers are given. However, almost all of the answers can be derived from the visuals alone.

Movie

Civilization (D.W Griffith, 1916): This is an antiwar film made by D.W Griffith in 1916 at the time of the mass loss of life in the battlefield trenches of Belgium and France. A two- minute extract from the film is used in a documentary (*An Ocean Apart)* on British-American relations during World War I. No effort is made to go into the details of World War I in class, but a brainstorming session can be used to pool the students' background knowledge on the conflict, and this is usually sufficient to ascertain the basic information. Students watch an edited closed-captioned documentary (supplemented by a short lecture) on the lead up to U.S. intervention in World War I and the role of the early Hollywood studios and directors as reflectors of American public opinion. They are then told that they will see a movie made by the leading director of the day, at a time when most

Amerians and the U.S. President opposed any intervention. The movie deals with a war between two unnamed European kingdoms which represent two real countries. In the scene shown, there is an antiwar demonstration in one of these countries and the king puts the leader of this antiwar demonstration into jail. The king visits the leader in jail to make fun of him, but while mocking him, he has a vision or dream in which the antiwar leader becomes the ghost of Jesus Christ and guides the king through the battlefields of the war where so many people have died. The king now realizes his awful mistake and ends the war. Students are given three written interpretations of what the "message" or moral of this scene is and they are asked to choose the correct one. In order to do so, they must identify the image of Christ and interpret his gestures to the King. Some relatively difficult but short text (of the type usually found in silent films) also gives some clues. This exercise closely matches those that students might be asked to complete in a reading class, but the visual element considerably increases the interest and motovation level.

TV Commercial

The Futureville Press (1957): This was made by the National Manufacturers Association to promote car purchases and new highways in the 1950's. Featured in a documentary *(Taken for a Ride)* on the domination of the automobile in mid-twentieth century America, this is shown as part of a unit on the development of car culture and the decline of public transportation in the U.S. Students watch a black-and-white animated commercial set in the year 2000 in which a man leaves work in a futuristic flying car. He easily overtakes the few other cars in the same "lane" and soon arrives home to park his car in one of four garages labelled "Dad," "Mom," "Junior," and "Sis." An information gap question and answer activity, based on pairs in which one student watches the screen while the other listens to the narration, is used to teach about the role of automobile corporations in promoting car ownership and highway construction in the post-war era.

Public service announcement (PSA) & government propaganda

Whose Side Are You on,(1996): This is a series of PSAs made by the non-profit American Advertising Council's Coalition for America's Children. It uses real-life individuals and realistic situations to show how children in America's inner cities are menaced by drugs and crime. Viewers are asked to contribute to, or become involved in, other organizations which are working to help such children. A 30-second segment on "Mad Dads," a group of African-American men who superficially resemble gang members, but who are in fact African-American fathers who patrol their neighborhoods to monitor drug sellers, is used to help break stereotypes that may be held by students about African-American fathers and the African-American family in general.

Conclusion

The appeal of video seems to cross most boundaries that can be found in the EFL classroom, including student level, age, culture, topic and teaching environment. Given some of the challenges inherent in creating an appropriate level content course for intermediate level students in the L1 environment, the use of edited and customized authentic video in combination with the kind of communicative and interactive activities which work well in the EFL classroom-based activities seems rational. Indeed, together with the approach outlined by Halvorsen and Gettings, it seems as likely as any approach to bridge the gap that intermediate students might otherwise fall through in this kind of challenging course.

References

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Notes

1 The titles mentioned in this discussion, *Rosie the Riveter, Ethnic Notions , An Ocean Apart , The Flapper* and *Taken For A Ride* are all TV documentaries that have been shown by the U.S. Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). See the PBS Internet homepage <http://www.pbs. org> for more details.